

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMCONSUL IBADAN

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L IBADAN 0308

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINT NI

SUBJECT: VISIT OF NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO TO OYO
STATE

REF: IBADAN 278

NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF ITS ARMED
FORCES LT. GEN. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO TOURED OYO STATE MARCH
9-12, MAKING IT THE 15TH STATE HE HAS VISITED RECENTLY.
HE WAS FAVORABLY BUT NOT ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED BY
NUMEROUS PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS ORGAINZED BY OYO STATE
OFFICIALS LED BY MILITARY GOV. BRIGADIER DAVID JEMIBEWON.

1. OBASANJO'S TOUR BEGAN WITH AN HOUR-LATE ARRIVAL AT
BODIJA AIRPORT IN THE REGULAR AIR NIGERIA F-28 WHICH LOADED
PASSENGERS FOR THE RETURN TRIP. THE VISIT WAS IMMEDIATELY
LABELLED "LOW-PROFILE" AND PROCEEDED MORE-OR-LESS ON
SCHEDULE FOR 3 DAYS WITH DEPARTURE OF THE 32-MAN ENTOURAGE
BY ROAD SUNDAY MORNING.

2. HE MADE SPEECHES COVERING MANY TOPICS. HE EXHORTED THE
STRIKING/SUSPENDED STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF IFE TO OBEY
UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES, HE TOLD POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS TO
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STUDY HARD AND ACCEPT TECHNICAL STUDIES, ADMONSIHED SOLDIERS
TO BE DISCIPLINED, SAID THAT NO-NEW STATES WOUL BE CREATED
(REFERRING TO DRIVE TO FORM OSHUN STATE SEPARATE FROM OYO),
AND BOTH IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS CARRIED THE
MESSAGE OF AN END TO THE OIL BOOM AND THE NECESSITY FOR
AUSTERITY IN GOVT SPENDING.

3. OBASANJO HAD NOTHING NEW TO SAY BUT DOMONSTRATED IN OYO WHAT HE PRESUMABLY DID IN OTHER STATES HIS RELAXED STYLE AND SPREAD WORD ON CURRENT FMG POLICIES. THE PEOPLE OF OYO ARE CERTAINLY MORE AWARE OF HIS PERSONALITY NOW THAN BEFORE, BUT HE MADE LITTLE IMPACT ON A STILL POLITICALLY APATHETIC POPULATION. IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SPENT TIME IN HIS CAREER IN IBADAN, HE WAS NOT ABLE TO GENERATE ANY REAL WELCOME EXCEPT FOR THE TAXI DRIVERS WHO WERE SAID TO HAVE TRANSPORTED PEOPLE FREE TO LIBERTY STADIUM (DISPUTED BY SOME).

4. MIL. GOV. JEMIBEWON PULLED ALL STOPS HE COULD TO IMPRESS ON OBASANJO THE RESULTS OF HIS OWN VIGOROUS LEADERSHIP. HIS LONG LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONTRASTED WITH POOR ROADS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND POWER. WHILE IBADAN WAS SPARED "LOAD-SHEDDING" OF ELECTRIC POWER DURING THE VISIT, POWER WAS INTERRUPTED SEVERAL TIMES BY "MAJOR FAULTS". JEMIBEWON IS AMBITIOUS, EVEN SAID TO HAVE RUN TO LAGOS TO APPEAL FOR A DIVISION COMMAND WHEN THE RECENT VACANCY OCCURRED.

5. IN ALL THE VISIT WENT SMOOTHLY AND WE NOW CAN RELAX WITH OUR NORMAL POWER OUTAGES. IF THIS WERE A POLITICAL COUNTRY, OBASANJO WOULD BE SAID TO HAVE GONE TO THE "HUSTINGS". WHAT CAN BE SAID IS THAT BY THE COMING OF POLITICS IN 1979 AND LATER, OBASANJO WILL BE THE BEST-KNOWN NIGERIAN.
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